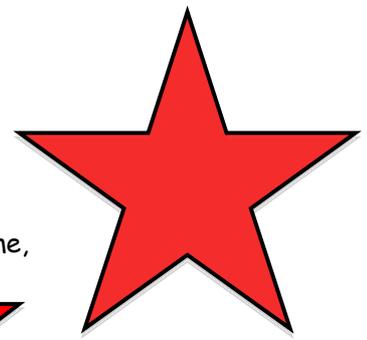


## FLYING START TO SCHOOL GUIDE

Starting out at your first school is an exciting, nervous, curious time, full of new experiences for children.



This flying start guide talks about some of the building blocks that Parents and Carers can help to put into place before school starts to give young children a flying start in school.

Some of these things may seem simple, some you might not have thought of, but experience has taught us that these things can all help children to settle and give them the independence they need for a good start at school.

### PRACTICAL THINGS

Lunch Time is one of the first tricky hurdles that the children come across. Our dinner staff will always help and assist but there is a satisfaction for children being able to do things themselves.

#### Using a Knife and Fork

If your child is going to be having school dinners then practising with a knife and fork before school will make lunchtimes much easier.

#### Choices

School Dinners, have lots of healthy and different things for the children to eat. If a child has confidence in picking the things that they like then this makes it easier for them to negotiate the dinner queue.

#### Packed Lunches

Yogurt Pots, Tubees, Apples, Oranges, Drink Cartons, Drink bottles etc are great for quickly getting a packed lunch ready but in the same way as a knife and fork it makes it much easier for children if they have practised opening and eating their own packed lunches. This could mean the odd picnic in the park over the summer if the weather holds out...

#### Labels

It is a classic thing from most parents and carers childhoods (along with wiping off dirt from noses with handkerchiefs) but please remember to label clothes, lunch boxes, etc - things do get mislaid.

#### P.E. Kits

The children love P.E. at our school but it is much easier when they can get dressed into and out of their PE Kits on their own. Socks and things are a bit tricky and a bit of practise really does help. Time them to see if they can do it in two minutes.

### LISTENING AND TALKING

#### Attention

A lot of school life is being able to listen to things that are being said to you whether this is by teachers, staff or other children. As a child - paying attention to what is being said, what is around you, what you have to say, what other classmates have to say will all be a learning process in the first few weeks at school. No top tips for this one...it is a bit of parents and carers dream to be listened to by their child.

#### Talking

As I remember it, most of my childhood was filled with being told to keep it down, and to be quiet. However, Talking is very important in the development of children at school. This could mean standing

up and talking about a toy, a book or describing what you did at the weekend. Encouraging your child to do this (Show and Tell is a great game for this) will help them become confident at school.

#### Choosing

This is another skill that soon gets used when starting school. There is so much to do at school that there are often choices to be made in terms of what to do, what to play with, which activity to do...helping children to become confident in making choices really does allow them to find their voice, independence and self-belief.

#### Showing Interest

This is one for all of the parents and carers of children - by showing an interest, talking to and listening to what your child has been doing in a day this will help your child tell you what it was like at school, what they enjoy, if anything is troubling them, etc. It only takes a minute or two each day but can make a big difference.

#### Needs and Feelings

There will be times at school that every child needs something (like going to the toilet), feels happy, feels sad, and a whole host of other things. Encouraging children to talk about what they need and how they feel makes it easier for them to make a happy start in a new school...it also helps them learn about their class-mates feelings and needs as they embark on their initial social lives.

### **SOCIAL LIFE**

One of the great things about school, are the friends that they make with children that are going through school with them. This is a very important part of going to school.

#### Sharing with others

Games in the playground, working on making things together, giving each other time to talk, taking turns to do things...these are all of the things that we have to find our way through in learning how to get on with others at school. All of this can only really be learned through experience so the more opportunities that children have to practise this the quicker they can develop these skills.

#### Doing the right thing

As a pupil at the school there are expectations placed upon the children (to have kind words, helping hands, listening ears and smiles). It is really about doing the right things like helping when asked, tidying up when needed, owning up if something gets broken, not blaming others, and not setting out to hurt other children, etc. These are all situations that children encounter at school and talking them through positively and setting examples really do help to shape the children at school.

#### Thanks

This is by no means a complete list of what helps a child settle into school but does give parents and carers ideas of what helps. We have a great school with a good reputation for happy children and good academic results and long may it continue.

#### **Nigel Goddard**

Chair of Governors, Tuel Lane Infant School.

